

HB 1184 -- FOSTER CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Grisamore

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass by Consent" by the Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill specifies that a minor 16 years of age or older who is in the legal custody of the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services must be qualified and competent to contract for the purchase of automobile insurance with the consent of the division or the juvenile court. The minor must be responsible for paying the costs of the insurance premiums and must be liable for damages caused by his or her negligent operation of a motor vehicle. A state department, foster parent, or entity providing case management of children on behalf of the department cannot be responsible for paying any insurance premiums or liable for any damages of any kind as a result of the operation of a motor vehicle by the minor.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill allows foster children to access and obtain auto insurance. The Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Foster Children recommended this change. Currently, the state has a policy that follows the child, even if the child moved from foster home to foster home; however, only foster youth that are age 18 or older are able to use this policy because our current law does not allow a minor to enter into a contract. There are approximately 1,500 children who are 16-17 years old in the state's foster care system who could benefit from the ability to access auto insurance.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Grisamore; Melody Yancey, Children's Division; Missouri Coalition of Children's Agencies; and Great Circle.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.